

7 CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. Method of providing an Electronic Coupon System comprising:
 2. Coupon generation, Coupon distribution, Coupon Storage, Coupon
5 Storage Management, Coupon Verification, Coupon Redemption for
cash, value or coupon and Coupon Trading.
 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon generated is uniform,
digital and secure XML based for online and offline use.
 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the coupon generated is by
10 accepting a set of input parameters.
 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the generated coupons could be
in bulk or on-demand.
 6. The method of claim 3, wherein the generated coupons are tracked
using a Tracking Database for later use in trading, verification and
15 redemption.
 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the tracking database is a
database of coupon parameters and coupon state.
 8. The method of claim 2, wherein the distributing mechanism enables
distribution of generated coupons from a Internet Web site in a variety
20 of forms including, but not limited to banner ads, hyperlinks, pictures,
text, archived sets, e-mail, Or from Point of Sale Terminals at a store,
Or from any other electronic protocol or mechanism.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the distribution mechanism may also include a coupon Tracking database.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the tracking database is a database of coupon parameters and coupon state.
- 5 11. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon storage system enables customer members to securely store online coupons in personal bins (called Sacks), which are allocated for their use at a participating portal.
- 10 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the coupon storage system also provides management functions including, but not limited to deleting expired coupons automatically, personalizing the Sack for trading, receiving and storing coupons.
13. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon trading system enables members to exchange, barter, sell, or gift coupons to other members.
- 15 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the coupon trading system enables members to set policies for automatic trading transactions.
15. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon verification system provides mechanism for verification of coupons.
- 20 16. The method of claim 2, wherein the coupon redemption system provides mechanism for redeeming coupons by coupon issuer and redeeming outlets for value associated with the presented coupon.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the coupon redemption system provides mechanism for redeeming coupons with automatic deposit of redeemed cash values into user's bank account.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein the redemption system is preceded by enabling Coupon Verification.
19. The method of a Coupon Trading system, wherein electronic coupons can be bought, sold or exchanged for value by parties.
20. The Method of claim 19, wherein the parties could be the buyer, seller or the trading arbiter.
21. The method of claim 19, wherein the value could be cash, kind (goods), or coupons of value depending on the terms agreed to by the parties.
22. The method of digitally signing the coupons by each of the party involved when it passes from one entity to another.